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ORNITHOLOGICAL RESULTS OF THE CANADIAN
'NEPTUNE' EXPEDITION TO HUDSON BAY AND
NORTHWARD. 1903-1904.

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IN the summer of 1903 an expedition was sent out by the Canadian Government to Hudson Bay and northward for the purpose of taking formal possession of certain lands and islands, which for many years had been understood by everyone to belong to Great Britain or Canada, but which in some cases had never been formally claimed as such. The purpose of the expedition was also to establish custom and police relations with some of the whaling stations in the far north, make surveys, etc. The good sealing steamer 'Neptune,' chartered by the government, carried, beside its complement of men and officers, Mr. A. P. Low, in charge of the expedition, several members of the Geological Survey of Canada, Mr. A. Halkett, the naturalist, and an officer and five men of the Northwestern Mounted Police. They left Halifax harbor August 23, 1903, and entered it again October 11, 1904, being thus absent one year and fifty-one days. As such expeditions are not made very frequently and not many ornithologists reach the places visited by this one, it may not be amiss to make the ornithological results obtained more widely known than can be done by the usual government report. The writer, therefore, with the kind permission and aid of Messrs. A. P. Low and A. Halkett, carefully went over the material brought back and took copious notes of it and from the journals of these gentlemen.

The route followed was roughly as follows: From Halifax along the coast of Labrador to Port Burwell, near Cape Chidley, the northeasternmost point of Labrador; from there, with many deviations right and left to some whaling stations, across the northern part of Ungava Bay and westward to Charles Island and Cape Wolstenholme into Evans Strait; south of Southampton Island to Cape Fullerton, at the entrance of Chesterfield Inlet in the northwestern corner of Hudson Bay. Here they remained in winter quarters from October, 1903, to July 18, 1904, at which date the ice broke up sufficiently to admit of their passage out. During this long stay excursions were made inland to the west, northward to Hayes River, and many to Southampton Island. They then sailed out of Hudson Bay over approximately the same route as inward, then from Cape Chidley north to Frobisher Bay, Cumberland Sound, then across Davis Strait to Greenland, and along its coast to latitude $78^{\circ} 40'$. They landed at Ellsmere Land and North Devon Island and went quite a distance west into Lancaster Sound, and into Pond's Inlet, along the coast of Baffin Land; then again eastward on account of the ice, once more into Cumberland Sound, Port Burwell, Kikkerton, Blacklead, etc., and back to Halifax.

The following is a list of the ornithological material brought back and some of the notes furnished me by Messrs. A. P. Low and A. Halkett.

1. *Gavia arctica*. BLACK-THROATED LOON.—Four skins, one male, June 17, 1904, and two females, July 16, 1904, at Cape Fullerton, and one from Southampton Island. One full set of 2 eggs, Southampton Island, July 5, 1904. The eggs are dark chocolate, glossy, with a few and small umber spots; size 3.10×2 in., and 3.10×2.03 in. Common in the northern part of Hudson Bay, but not seen much elsewhere; not seen in winter. Breeds abundantly on Southampton Island in the manner of the common Loon. Stomach contents: stones and fragments of shells, but no fish bones.

2. *Gavia lumme*. RED-THROATED LOON.—Three skins from Cape Fullerton, a male June 17, and 2 females July 16, 1904. One egg, from Cape Chidley, is elongated, dark olive with numerous inconspicuous umber spots or dots. The full set is also two eggs. Size 2.85×1.70 . This species is not quite as common as the preceding, still it is not uncommon in the same places. In Labrador it nests on grass tussocks along the ponds or on little islands in them. It can fly directly from the water (A. P. L.), which the preceding species cannot do so easily. Stomach contents: fish bones and stones.

3. *Cephus mandtii*. MANDT'S GUILLEMOT.—Eight skins, 6 in adult summer plumage, 2 immature, taken June 16, July 16 and 17, 1904, at Cape Fullerton, where they are common summer and winter, as also throughout Hudson Bay and northward; some were seen at North Devon. Although feeding on crustaceans and small fishes they are used as food by both Eskimos and white people. They nest in cavities under rocks and boulders, one, two, or very seldom three eggs being the full set. They nest late, none of the 12 eggs collected being taken before July 10. The ground color of the eggs is greenish white to chalky white, with large and small spots and blotches of black, umber and lilac, most numerous and largest at the larger end.

4. *Uria lomvia*. BRÜNNICH'S MURRE.—Three skins from Cape Wolsstenholme, Hudson Strait, where there is a large rookery. Male and two females, July 21, 1904. They were sitting on the ice cakes of a large ice jam. All through Hudson Strait they were numerous, often flying about the ship. They are common at North Devon and other arctic islands, also on the coast of Greenland.

5. *Alle alle*. DOVEKIE.—This species was observed to be common from Frobisher Bay northward, where it nests in the cliffs on the coast of Baffin Land, Hall Island, and North Greenland. Two eggs were collected on the Cary Islands near Cape Parry, North Greenland. It deposits its single egg, like the Guillemots, in crevices. The eggs are very pale green, one unmarked, the other sprinkled with minute brown dots.

6. *Stercorarius parasiticus*. PARASITIC JAEGER.—Two skins were brought from Cape Fullerton, where the birds were not uncommon. The Arctic Tern (*Sterna paradisæa*) suffers most from its depredations. Two eggs were collected in Southampton Island; the ground color is dull olive-grayish with dark and pale umber-vinaceous spots and blotches, also some lines. Size, 2.40×1.90 . The stomach contents of this and the next species were bones and feathers, which seems to indicate that they may occasionally act as true birds of prey. This species was more common than the next.

7. *Stercorarius longicaudus*. LONG-TAILED JAEGER.—Three specimens, in the light phase of plumage, were collected at Fullerton (date?). To this species probably belong two Jaeger eggs obtained at Cape Chidley on the outward trip, September, 1903, from Eskimos. They are of the same color and appearance as the preceding, but the markings are more obscure, and they are smaller, measuring 1.80×1.30 and 1.70×1.45 .

8. *Pagophila alba*. IVORY GULL.—A beautiful young bird was taken at Fullerton, Sept. 22, 1904. The primaries are all tipped with black and there are many partly hidden black spots on the greater and lesser wing-coverts, and above the under edge of the wing, which form a pleasing contrast to the otherwise immaculate white, soft plumage. The gizzard contained oily and hairy substances, also what was apparently an onion, gotten no doubt from refuse thrown from some whaler, which they like to follow up.

9. *Rissa tridactyla*. KITTIWAKE. — Met with, but not common.

10. *Larus glaucus*. GLAUCOUS GULL: BURGOMASTER.—An immature specimen was taken Sept. 11, 1904, in Ungava, Labrador. It is in the typical plumage of birds of the year. It had fish bones and surface amphipods in its stomach. Not common.

11. *Larus marinus*. GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL. — Found to be not rare on the Labrador coast, and common at North Devon. They live on fish, but on account of their size are not subject to the attacks of Jægers. Ten eggs from different nests were collected; ground color, grayish white, greenish or even brown, while the spots and blotches are umber, yellowish brown and pale lilac. Size of three: 3×2.05 ; 3.10×2.15 ; 2.85×2 .

12. *Larus argentatus*. HERRING GULL. — Three adult specimens were taken at Cape Fullerton May 29 and June 10 and 15. They had broken shells, seeds, berries, and one a crab, in the stomach. Common in Hudson Bay and Strait but not common further north.

13. *Xema sabinii*. SABINE'S GULL.—This gull was common on Southampton and other islands, breeding there along the shores and the banks of small ponds in company with the Arctic Tern. They make no nest but deposit their eggs in the sand. Two eggs were taken at Southampton, June 28, 1904; ground color of one, dull pale greenish, the other, grayish greenish white, with brown and pale lilac spots and much blotching of brown and blackish at the large end. These birds were very inquisitive and not at all shy at Southampton.

14. *Sterna hirundo*. COMMON TERN. — Seen in some parts only of Hudson Bay. Not as plentiful as next species.

15. *Sterna paradisæa*. ARCTIC TERN.—One female was taken June 16, 1904, at Fullerton and two more on Southampton Island. This was the most common tern seen from the northern parts of Hudson Bay to the far north. They nest along the shores, placing their eggs, without nesting material, on the sand or gravel. Thirty-six eggs were brought along, which unfortunately were not kept in their original sets, since the Eskimos which lived about the ship would bring some. The ground color varies much, from light grayish brown, olive or pale greenish to darker shades of the same colors. Some have small, others large spots and blotches of umber, pale lilac, etc. Sizes of five: 1.45×1.10 ; 1.65×1.20 ; 1.55×1.10 ; 1.60×1.20 ; 1.75×1.15 . Several were collected at Fullerton, June 28, 1904, others at Cape Chidley, Labrador, in June, 1903.

16. *Fulmarus glacialis*. FULMAR; 'NODDY.'—One taken Aug. 19, 1904, at Eclipse Bay, Pond's Inlet, in the far north. Numbers of them could be seen around the sterns of whaling vessels.

17. *Harelda hyemalis*. OLD SQUAW.—Three skins taken June 16 (♂ and ♀) and June 22 (♂) at Cape Fullerton. These were very dark, upper parts and breast nearly all black; some rusty brown on back, neck and scapulars. They were very abundant and noisy at Fullerton and Southampton. They nest around ponds; the nests are made of grasses,

lined with feathers. One set of 7 eggs was taken June 30, 1904; color pale bluish olive; measurements, 2.25×1.50 ; 2.15×1.45 ; 2.20×1.45 . Another set of 8 eggs, was taken June 27, 1904, also at Fullerton, which were much paler in color; sizes: 2.05×1.50 ; 2.10×1.45 ; 2.35×1.55 .

18. *Somateria mollissima borealis*. GREENLAND EIDER.—This fine duck was found to be common around Fullerton and in all the region to North Devon. Some remained in the open water all winter and were frequently shot for food. The head of one of these, thrown out by the cook, was by chance put into formalin by Mr. Halkett, and this shows a curious anomaly in color, inasmuch as the areas around the bill are black, which Mr. H. thinks is not caused by the preservative. The skins show the regular coloring. A young one, still in its downy stage, was taken at Cumming Creek, North Devon Island, Aug. 13, 1904. The entire upper parts are fuscous, the under parts light mouse color. This species breeds on rocky islands, placing its nest on sandbars, in grass between rocks, or in any available place near the shore. One set of 9 eggs was taken on Southampton Island, July 17, 1904; color, pale olive to greenish gray; sizes: 2.75×2 ; 3.20×2.10 ; 2.90×1.95 . A single egg was also picked up on the beach of Charles Island, Sept. 3, 1904. Two incomplete sets of 4 eggs each were taken at Fullerton, July 17, 1904.

19. *Somateria spectabilis*. KING EIDER.—Not as common as the preceding. Four skins, taken June 16 and 26 at Fullerton and Southampton. It is much less timid than the preceding species, allowing close approach. It does not remain in winter at Fullerton and breeds in different localities from those of *S. mollissima borealis*. It places its soft, down-lined nest on tussocks of grass along the shores and on islands of inland ponds. It was common on Southampton Island where the other was scarce. A set of 4 eggs was taken at this place, June 28, 1904. Color, pale olive gray; size, 2.50×1.75 . The stomach contents were fragments of mollusks, stones and sand.

20. *Chen hyperborea*. LESSER SNOW GOOSE.—This species, called Wavy by the whalers, is rather common on Southampton Island and Baffin Land. Two males were taken June 4 and 7 respectively. On the former date a flock of twenty-two was seen, the first two of which seemed to be Blue Geese (*Chen caerulescens*). Stomach contents: vegetable matter and stones. They breed mostly on islands along the eastern shores of Hudson Bay, and more abundantly to the northward. Their nests are found in wet ground and are made of grass, moss, etc., with down on top, the whole 6-8 inches high. A set of 7 eggs was taken on Southampton Island June 22, 1904. They are creamy white, much like eggs of the common hen; sizes: 3.25×2.10 ; 3.25×2.05 .

21. *Branta canadensis*. CANADA GOOSE.—Found common at Labrador; not met with further north.

22. *Branta c. hutchinsii*. HUTCHIN'S GOOSE.—A typical specimen was taken June 17, 1904, in the vicinity of Cape Fullerton. Length, 27 in.; wing, 17.50; bill, 1.75. The line of demarcation between the black and white areas on the head is a *straight* slanting line.

23. ? *Branta c. minima*. CACKLING GOOSE.—There is a skin in the collection which to all appearances belongs here. It was identified as this form also by Mr. E. White, who is familiar with this subspecies from the Pacific coast. It is much smaller than the preceding; the black area on the head is rounded out below the eyes, not forming a straight line, and the depression at the end of the bill is more pronounced. Length, 24; wing, 15.50; bill, 1.25. Both species were rare at Fullerton and Southampton.

24. *Branta bernicla*. BRANT.—A few breed around Cape Fullerton. Not common.

25. *Olor columbianus*. WHISTLING SWAN.—Two were taken on Southampton Island, where it was common, as also in the flat land north of Repulse Bay. They breed in low lands with lakes, where their nests, constructed of seaweed, grass and moss, are very conspicuous. They are very bulky affairs, about 3 feet in diameter at the base tapering to 18 inches at the top, and 18 inches high. A set of 2 eggs was taken on Southampton, July 4, 1904. They are ivory color, unspotted, one end as large as the other; sizes: 4×2.55 ; 3.50×2.45 . It may be interesting to ornithologists who make their own bird skins to hear, that the fat of all these fatty skins was removed by the Eskimos, who *bite* it off. And they do it cleanly and thoroughly. Tastes differ!

26. *Grus canadensis*. LITTLE BROWN CRANE.—A bird of the year was taken in Southampton in July, 1904. No more were seen.

27. *Crymophilus fulcarius*. RED PHALAROPE.—This was very common around Fullerton and Southampton. The skins of five adult and two immature specimens were brought back, taken at the above place in June and July, 1904. They nest around fresh water ponds, laying their eggs, without nesting material, in depressions in the sand or moss, often in lichens. A set of 4 eggs was collected July 2, 1904, at Southampton. They are very acutely tapering; ground color light brown, with large chocolate blotchings. A single egg, taken June 26, had a greenish tint in the ground color.

28. *Actodromas fuscicollis*. WHITE-RUMPED SANDPIPER.—Three adults of this species were taken at Cape Fullerton May 22 and June 16, 1904. Not very common.

Nine sets of sandpiper eggs were brought back, but the owners of most of these were not identified. While it might be possible to identify them by comparing them with sets of known identity and with descriptions and measurements, it would not be satisfactory owing to the great variability in the eggs of the different species, and the little knowledge we have of them in some cases. The first one of these sets was collected June 23 and the last July 4.

29. *Actodromas minutilla*. LEAST SANDPIPER.—This and the Semipalmated were the most common sandpipers in the region. A set of eggs was taken July 4 at Fullerton. The four eggs are, like all these sandpiper eggs, pyriform; the ground color of two is whitish, of the other

two pale brown, with many dark brown, umber, black, and pale lilac markings.

30. *Pelidna alpina sakhalina*. RED-BACKED SANDPIPER.—One adult was taken in July, 1904, at Southampton. Not common.

31. *Ereunetes pusillus*. SEMPALMATED SANDPIPER.—Very common, as are also their nests. A set of 2 eggs, which Mr. Low thinks is referable to this species, has the ground color whitish, with an almost imperceptible bluish tinge, heavily dotted, blotched and washed with umber, brown, and faint lilac. Spots larger at the larger end; size: $1.25 \times .85$.

32. *Calidris arenaria*. SANDERLING.—Common; one taken at Fullerton June 16, 1904.

33.? *Numenius hudsonicus*. HUDSONIAN CURLEW.—Mr. Low says Curlew are not uncommon on Southampton and breed there. I suppose that would mean this species. None were taken.

34. *Squatarola squatarola*. BLACK-BELLIED PLOVER.—A female was taken at Fullerton in June, 1904. They were not common.

35. *Charadrius dominicus*. GOLDEN PLOVER.—Not rare; some breed on Whale Point.

36. *Ægialitis semipalmata*. SEMPALMATED PLOVER; RINGNECK.—Common. Their eggs are laid on the sand or gravel of the beaches, no attempt being made at nest building. One set of 4 eggs was taken at Whale Point, near Fullerton, July 1. They are large for the bird, light brown with a slight green tinge and numerous roundish blackish umber and lilac spots and dots. Another set of 3 eggs was taken at Fullerton, June 28.

37. *Arenaria interpres*. TURNSTONE.—Two adults in fine plumage were taken in July, 1904, at Southampton. Rather scarce.

38. *Lagopus rupestris*. ROCK PTARMIGAN.—Fairly common as far north as the willow, dwarfed at last to a height of only six inches, is met with. They build their nest of grasses, etc., lined with finer grass and some of their own feathers. The usual complement is 8-10 eggs. Five eggs of this species were taken at Cape Chidley, Labrador. They were creamy-buff, heavily dotted, spotted, and blotched with blackish umber; size of 2: 1.55×1.15 ; of 3: 1.70×1.20 .

39. *Archibuteo lagopus sancti-johannis*. AMERICAN ROUGH-LEGGED HAWK.—Common at Labrador, where it nests on the top of cliffs, not on the side, like the Duck Hawk. The nest is rudely built of sticks. Ten eggs were obtained from Eskimos at Cape Chidley.

40. *Falco islandus*. WHITE GYRFALCON.

41. *Falco rusticolus obsoletus*. BLACK GYRFALCON.—These two species are reported by Mr. Low as common near Cape Chidley and over the whole of Ungava, where they also breed in numbers. Mr. Low has frequently been in Labrador.

42. *Falco peregrinus anatum*. DUCK HAWK.—An immature bird was taken at Fullerton, June 27, 1904. At Cape Chidley and in Labrador generally it is more common, nesting on the sides of cliffs, in almost

inaccessible places. Two eggs were obtained at Cape Chidley. They are bright reddish brown, covered so profusely with markings of the same color, only darker, as to almost hide the ground color. Size, 2.10×1.55 .

43. *Nyctea nyctea*. SNOWY OWL.—This species is said by the Eskimos, who are quite shrewd observers, to breed inland from Cape Fullerton.

44. *Otocoris alpestris*. SHORE LARK.—Three male specimens were taken at Fullerton May 25 and 26, 1904. They were not common there; a few could be seen walking around among the Snowbirds. Much more common at Cape Chidley, from where a nest with four eggs was brought. The nest, placed on the ground, partly sunk in moss, is made of moss, plant stems, grasses, finer toward the cup; this is lined with feathers and caribou hair. The outside diameter is 5 in., of cup, 2 in., depth of cup, 1.75-2 in., outside depth, 2-2.50 in. The eggs are of a dull olive whitish ground color, almost covered by innumerable small spots of brownish lilac.

45. *Corvus corax principalis*. NORTHERN RAVEN.—A fine specimen was shot at Eric Cove, Ungava, Sept. 13, 1903. Several were seen at Cape Fullerton throughout the winter. Five were seen flying in single file at Port Burwell. No doubt they are conspicuous in that endless waste of white in winter.

46. *Acanthis linaria*. REDPOLL.—One was taken April 26, 1904, at Fullerton, where it was rarely seen. This is not to be wondered at, when we hear that the largest thing in the line of trees or bushes to be found there are stunted willows, six inches high.

47. *Acanthis linaria rostrata*. GREATER REDPOLL.—A specimen of what seems to be this species was taken on the vessel off the Labrador coast, Sept. 4, 1903.

48. *Passerina nivalis*. SNOWFLAKE.—This was the most abundant bird in all places visited by the expedition, it equalling in numbers all the other birds combined. It was found breeding at all places touched, as far north as $78^{\circ} 30'$. Therefore there was more material brought back of this species than of any other, namely 17 skins and 18 sets of eggs, 7 of which are in their original nests. According to Mr. Halkett the first ones arrived at Fullerton in the season of 1904 about April 7, fresh flocks coming every day after that until after April 20, when they seemed to be all there that cared to stay. About the middle of September they commenced leaving Cape Fullerton and after the 26th of that month no more were seen by him. The skins are of birds taken from April 23 to June 11. Accordingly there is a great variation in the coloring, from the rusty looking individuals which we see further south to the pure white and black of the highest breeding plumage. A female taken May 25 has the feathers of the head black at the base, brownish and grayish at the end; back similar but with some feathers bright rusty. A male, May 29, has upper half of wings pure white, a female, June 11, is blackish fuscous all over.

Although they arrived at Fullerton the middle of April, they did not commence to nest until the end of June. The first and incomplete sets were taken June 30, containing 4 eggs; July 1, two of 3 and one of 4 eggs were taken; July 2, one of 6, July 3 one of 7 and one of 3; July 5 one of 3; July 6 one of 4; from Cape Chidley come two of 7 eggs collected by Eskimos in July, 1903; sets of 4, 5, and 6 eggs each have no date. So the full set seems to vary from 3 or 4 to 7 eggs. There is great variation also in the color and markings of the eggs of different sets. One set has the color pale bluish, much washed with light brownish, with a few conspicuous blackish dots; another is faint bluish white with pale lilac markings, heavily dotted with umber, mostly at the larger end, size $.85 \times .65$; another is darker bluish green, with many minute brown and lilac spots and a few large umber dots at the larger end; some are almost white; some again more elongated in shape than others, one set measuring $.85 \times .55$ in.

All the nests found were not placed in the open, as stated in most books, but below rocks and boulders. In a typical nest the material consists of grasses, old feathers and plant pappus, lined with the last and feathers of larger birds. Some have a lining of caribou hair and the outside rim of moss and lichens. The dimensions are: diameter outside, 6.50 in., inside 2.75 in., height 2.25 in., depth of cup, 1.25-1.50 in.

The stomach contents were small seeds, sand, and vegetable matter.

49. *Calcarius lapponicus*. LAPLAND LONGSPUR. — This species began to arrive at Fullerton about May 26, and was thereafter seen in the company of Snowflakes and Shore Larks. Ten skins were brought home, taken from May 26 to June 16, and one taken on board the vessel Sept. 4, 1903. These skins are far prettier than those of birds taken further south during migration, the blacks being deep and velvety, the chestnut collar bright and glowing. They were not as abundant as the Snowflakes, nor were any seen at Fullerton when the ship reached there at the end of September, 1903.

The first eggs are laid about July 1. The nests are placed in grass in the open, especially on the side of banks of fresh water ponds. Two sets of eggs, one of four, the other of six, were collected, both taken July 1. The size is $.80 \times .62$. They are dull olive or brown, with many streaks, marks and washes of darker brown or vinaceous. The nest is of coarser make than that of the Snowflake, the walls are also thinner. It is made of grass, the cup, lined with fine grasses and feathers, is large for the bird. Outside diameter 3.50 in., of cup 2.50 in., depth of cup, 2.50 in.

50. *Setophaga ruticilla*. REDSTART. — A poor skin of one was shown to Mr. Halkett at Port Burwell by the factor of the station, showing that this species occasionally reaches the north of Labrador.

51. *Anthus pensilvanicus*. AMERICAN PIPIT. — Not rare at most places visited. The nest is placed on the ground in grass.